

S T A T E M E N T
ON
Implementation of the New York State Abortion Law*
BY
THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH
OF
THE NEW YORK ACADEMY OF MEDICINE

There is much confusion at present concerning the implementation of the New York State Law regarding medical abortion, which becomes effective July 1, 1970. Many committees have been meeting to draw up guidelines in an attempt to implement the law in a manner consistent with medical practice of the highest quality.

The Committee on Public Health of the New York Academy of Medicine has also considered this matter and has reviewed the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Obstetrics and Gynecology of the New York City Health Department. At its meeting on June 1 the Committee on Public Health endorsed the Health Department recommendations.

In addition, the Committee on Public Health believes that the following observations are appropriate to ensure proper implementation:

1) There is an anticipated scarcity of hospital beds in New York City for patients requesting elective abortion. At present such abortions should be hospital based (on either an inpatient or outpatient basis) and should be performed as early in the course of pregnancy as possible to ensure high-quality medical care and to minimize complications. Management is more complicated after the 12th week of pregnancy.

2) For the present, priority should be given in New York City to women residing within the city or to previous patients of New York City physicians because of the over-all shortage of beds, as well as for

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the need to have facilities available for patients with diagnostic and therapeutic problems of an emergency nature.

3) No physician or other person or hospital should be required to perform or participate in a medical or surgical procedure which may result in the termination of pregnancy.

4) Adequate financing from both the public and private sectors should be available to provide adequate space, qualified physicians, and nursing staff, as well as necessary equipment.

The Committee on Public Health affirms the need for adequate facilities and qualified personnel. The Committee also feels strongly that medical care of high quality should not be sacrificed in the resolution of the many problems that may arise.